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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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SUBJECT: "FORTNIGHTLY FOOD-SHOPPING TIPS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Consumers' Counsel, U.S.D.A.

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Once again here are tips for the food-shopper direct from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Here is news of supplies and prices of the foods coming to market these days.

You may have noticed that fresh vegetables are not quite so plentiful in your market this month as they were a year ago. The reason is the cold wave that hit the country in November. Remember the cold wave that caught all those turkeys just before Thanksgiving? Well, that same cold did a lot of damage to tender vegetable crops in the South and Southwest. So the markets this month will have fewer tender vegetables. But they will still have plenty of hardy vegetables. With the exception of sweetpotatoes and onions, supplies of all hardy vegetables are larger than last year.

The vegetables that took the worst beating from the weather in November were tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers and eggplant growing in Texas and Florida. These 2 States supply most of the tender vegetables on the market this month. The snap beans almost ready for market suffered, too, but not so much as the 4 vegetables mentioned. To offset the loss Cuba is sending shipments of tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers and peppers to our markets. But even with the help of Cuban vegetables, our markets won't have as many vegetables as they had last year.

So much for vegetable news. Now for news of fruit on the market. The 1940-41 citrus crop got off to a late start, but by this time plentiful supplies of oranges, grapefruit and tangerines have been coming to market. You can expect even

larger supplies coming in all this month. In recent years the citrus production has expanded so that oranges and grapefruit have come to be almost like staple groceries. The housewife going shopping just expects to find oranges on the market in the same quantity at any month of the year. But every good shopper needs to remember that citrus fruits have peak seasons when the price is likely to be low just as other fruits have. Tangerines are most plentiful on the market in December. Grapefruit supplies are heaviest from January to March. Orange marketings ordinarily reach their seasonal high in December when Florida shipments are at their peak. But from January to March orange supplies are almost as plentiful as in the peak month of December.

This winter and spring the markets will have more citrus fruit than they had a year ago. You'll notice the increase mostly after January. Perhaps you remember the freeze last January that damaged so many grapefruit and orange crops in Florida, in Texas and cut down the citrus fruits on the market all during the late winter and spring months.

This year the citrus fruit coming out of Florida will be regulated as to quality and size under an A.A.A. marketing agreement. During the first half of December only oranges grading "U.S.No.2" or better will come out of the State for sale. And only tangerines grading "U.S. Combination" or better will be shipped out of Florida. Shipments of small-size fruits will be prohibited.

So much for citrus news. Now for apple news. The peak of the 1940 apple season was in October. Since then fewer and fewer apples have been coming to market. The apple crop this fall was about 20 percent smaller than last year's crop, so the markets have had fewer apples to sell. As you might expect, apple prices have been rising since October, as they usually do after the peak of the season.

Now from fruit news let's turn to news about meat. Supplies of pork, beef and lamb on the market this month are about the same as a year ago. But beginning

in January the meat picture is due to change. And here's the picture as you may see it in 1941.

From January to September 1941 not nearly so much pork will be on the market. And you can expect to pay considerably more for pork than you are paying now. Farmers have been selling their hogs earlier than usual. So prices may go up more than they usually do in the late winter and early spring.

Now as for beef and veal in '41, the predictions now are that the markets will have more instead of less. The lower grades of beef that sell as "Commercial" or "Utility" will be plentiful the entire year. The finer grades of beef selling as "Good" or "Choice" may not be so plentiful the first half of the new year, but they will be more plentiful the second half. The prices of Commercial and Utility beef will be about the same as the average price during 1940. Good and Choice beef will probably cost more this winter and spring, and about the same in the summer and fall. All in all, though supplies of beef will be plentiful during 1940, you may be paying more for your beef.

Much the same picture holds with lamb. From this month to April the lambs going to market are mostly grain-fed. Probably more grain-fed lamb will be on the market than a year ago. But the price of lamb will probably be higher.

The last tip today is about turkey. Supplies of turkey on the market for Christmas and New Year's will be about the same as a year ago, but larger than any year previous to that. And you will pay more per pound for hen turkeys than for the heavier tom turkeys during the holidays.

That's all the news for shoppers today. More in a couple of weeks.

